



NEWSLETTER

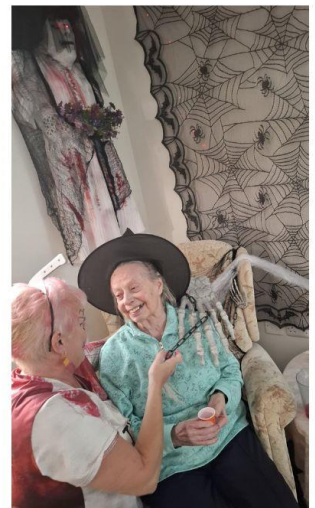


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West Heanton enjoyed a spectacularly spooky Halloween this year thanks to *Halloween Queen George & her Horrible Helpers!*



The team have really pulled out all the stops with frightful food, dreadful decorations, tricks and treats. Halloween is fast becoming a favourite celebration at West Heanton and we're looking forward to next year already!



Boo!





WEST HEANTON

SPOOKY WORD SEARCH



J W S T O G E B Q J I O J V B R B F
W I E H W Y R C R R Z S X E H D P H
E U H R Q N N R B O P N R S R I P I
P W X G E Z H A L L O W E E N N N E
E J E K D W N L A R B M E C T V V W
J L E F E Y O U D T C C S V K J K L
H S X C R N O L K O I R K T C K E X
K G E P D Z U E F O W J E U I O N O
H Z G O O A R S E X N R L E H C I R
K E O E C V A M P I R E E T P P K C
F P Q K I V T L O I E C T I M Y P B
P E V D H A U N T E D H O U S E A A
U M I I G O E R I N G E N M B L E S
W I T C H U J A O I E G R G E T S U
K Z H G O B L I N S E B X P T O R O
U C R T S S F D N U C B R E A O O K
O H E X T R I C K O R T R E A T F K
B P N Z O M B I E D F O H X V W T E

- BROOMSTICK CAULDRON CREEPY GHOST
GHOUL GOBLIN HALLOWEEN HAUNTEDHOUSE
MIDNIGHT POTION SKELETON SPIDER
TRICKORTREAT VAMPIRE WEREWOLF
WITCH ZOMBIE



Community News

Many thanks to Blake House Surgery & Holsworthy Medical Centre who both visited in October to administer Covid & Flu vaccines to those who wanted them. The **RSV Vaccine** is also being offered to people aged 75-79. This vaccine helps protect against Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) which can lead to pneumonia. You can find out more from your GP or from www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/rsv-vaccine

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service are hosting an online Community Conversation on 7th November. This is an excellent resource for safety advice and the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

November is Mouth Cancer Action Month. This is an annual campaign aimed at raising awareness about mouth cancer and educating people about the signs, symptoms, the importance of early detection and preventative measures. You can find out more here www.dentalhealth.org/mouthcancer



COMMUNITY conversations

Join us at our next online Community Conversations event where our friendly experts will be on hand to give top safety advice, and answer any questions you have about your fire and rescue service.

Next online meeting:
Date: 7 November
Time: 12 noon
Topic: Winter Safety

dsfire.gov.uk/safety/home/community-conversations



DEVON & SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE



NOVEMBER 2025
MOUTH CANCER ACTION MONTH

Raising awareness on the signs, risk factors, prevention and the importance of early detection this November with this digital resource.

10,825 people were **diagnosed** in the UK with mouth cancer last year

Last year **3,637** people in the UK **lost their life** to mouth Cancer

Mouth cancer causes **more deaths** in the UK each year than **road traffic accidents**

More people in the UK **die** each year of mouth cancer than of **cervical and testicular cancer combined**

The Risks:

- **Tobacco** is still considered the main cause of mouth cancer
- **Alcohol and drinking** in excess can increase risk
- The **human papilloma virus (HPV)** transmitted through oral sex
- **Poor diet** is linked to a third of all cases

What to look out for:

The three main signs to watch out for are:

- **Ulcers** that do not heal within three weeks
- **Lumps or swellings** in the head or neck area
- **A red or white patch**

Use this link to see more information on the signs and symptoms of mouth cancer:
<https://www.mouthcancerfoundation.org/symptoms/>

Share these video links with service users, staff and the public!

How to do a **self-check** and knowing the 'norm' is vital for early detection.
Watch this video for a guide on how to **carry out a self-check**:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cUAWi_5

Working in a supportive role in a care home or residential home?
Check out this video on **oral screening**:
<https://www.mouthcancerfoundation.org/screening-in-residential-care/>

Social Media Toolkit
Have a social media platform, get involved and use these resources to raise awareness.
www.mouthcancerfoundation.org/educational-resources

Downloadable Posters/flyers
Use the links to access posters and display them within your setting.
www.mouthcancerfoundation.org/educational-resources

NHS Royal Devon University Healthcare | rd.uh.ohesds@nhs.net | 01392 405705 | www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/dental **Devon** County Council

Congratulations to Geoff who has won Tom's Draw for October!

Geoff's main role at West Heanton is providing care support for clients living in the Suites.

Well done Geoff!

Apologies if you have been inconvenienced while our phone lines have been

down. This was due to an outage from our external provider. If the phones are down we're always reachable via email or direct message on social media.

Thanks for your patience and understanding 💙

CONGRATULATIONS

GEOFF

Selected in a random draw, Geoff was nominated by team mates for:
“Geoff always goes above and beyond, he always does more than is required and we really appreciate it. Thank you”

Well done! A £50 Marks & Spencer voucher is on its way to you.

TOM'S DRAW OCT 2025

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



***We've celebrated birthdays with three lovely people in October!
Happy Birthday all***

Spotlight Interview with... Erika! *Our award winning Activities Queen shares an insight into the life of a busy activities lead and why a biscuit (or two) is always part of the plan... Erika has been at West Heanton for 17 years and has gone from part time carer to full time Activities Lead. She's a familiar friendly face to most people at West Heanton & received a whopping 11 mentions in the QA Survey!*



What brought you to the team at West Heanton? We moved from London and I opened Clawton Pre School. West Heanton was just around the corner and I started as a weekend carer. Back then, most clients needed support with mobility issues. As time went on, more people presented with dementia challenges and I discovered a real passion for dementia care. Tom had been nudging me to take on activities, and one day, I finally said yes!

What inspired your move to Devon? With a young family, we wanted a better quality of life and slower pace. It was important that our children had a safe place to grow up in. We moved 20 years ago and haven't looked back.

What does a typical day look like? It all starts with setting the scene. Environment is everything - chairs in a circle so everyone can see each other, soft music, good lighting, something interesting on the tables, and of course, tea, coffee and biscuits. Once everyone's settled, we dive into the day's activity, always tailored to individual needs. At lunchtime we dress the tables like a restaurant; with tablecloths, napkins, flowers and gentle music playing. Afterwards, we relax with wordsearches or a little snooze in the comfortable chairs, before afternoon activities begin. We wind the day down with drinks and cake and sometimes a discussion about *this day in history*. We chat about what's been going on for everyone and their plans for the week ahead. Transport home usually starts at around 3.45pm and this is when others start to go back to the house for tea too. It's then up to me to ensure day centre is left clean and tidy, ready for the next day's events.

How do you plan meaningful activities? It's all about listening. We hold Residents' Activities Meetings with a proper agenda and minutes. We consult with all clients and the minutes from these meetings are used to plan activities, ensuring that suggestions, ideas and preferences are taken into account. The best way to plan any meaningful activity is to take the time to get to know clients. A meaningful activity to someone who enjoyed being a dinner lady might be peeling the vegetables. Passionate gardeners may enjoy sweeping up outside, weeding or potting up bulbs. A retired farmer might like a trip to Holsworthy Market, or to keep in touch with Farmers Weekly.



What is a common challenge? Lots of clients may lack confidence and say, "I can't do that anymore". It's then up to us to recognise this, take the person a step back in ability and provide appropriate resources. A client who used to embroider found it difficult because of arthritis in her hands and the aida being too small. Providing her with a thicker needle and a larger count aida she found she embroidered again.

Have you got a favourite themed day or time of year? Christmas! It's a whirlwind of crafts, cards, events, parties, carols, decorations and family visits. The house is buzzing with festive cheer and I love every minute of it - even while juggling my own family Christmas with my husband, son, daughter and six grandchildren. It's busy, but it fills me with that warm, fuzzy feeling.

What do you enjoy outside of work? I love reading, being in nature and spending time with my family. Family means everything to me and I treat our clients like they're my own. Honestly, I probably spend more time with them than anyone else!

What are you reading right now? I've just finished the *Clifton Chronicles* by Jeffrey Archer and I'm now on volume two of his *William Warwick* series - only seven more to go! Jeffrey Archer and Lucy Clarke are my current favourite authors.



Do you have a favourite activities day out? Yes - our trips to Instow. With a Hocking's ice cream in hand, watching the world go by. The clients love seeing the dogs and families. Passers-by often stop for a chat which is fantastic for remaining connected to our community. Any trip that sparks a smile or a memory is a winner.

What's in your lunchbox? I try to be healthy. So I'll have avocado on toast, berries and yoghurt, or sardines on toast with an apple. But I'll admit, a biscuit (or two) usually sneaks in!

What did you want to be growing up? A secretary! When I was six I got a little desk and toy phone for Christmas and spent hours making appointments. I trained in Pittman's typing at school and could hit 110 words per minute on a good day.

Can you share a recent moment that brought unexpected joy? Absolutely. There are so many. One client had been showing real improvement and I thought it was time to try a trip out. I spoke with the client who said "That might be nice." With their spouse's cautious blessing, we headed to Made-Well. We had lunch, wandered the allotments, visited the animals and soaked up the fresh air. This client was smiling, chatting and fully engaged. I sent photos to their spouse, who was overjoyed. A couple of weeks later, they felt confident enough to take their loved one out in the car - something they hadn't done for a long time. That's the kind of moment that stays with you.



How has your role evolved? Six years ago I joined West Heanton full time. The activities were already well established and we could see the real positive effect that engaging activities was having. People were happier; participating in activities they actually wanted to do, getting exercise and creating friendships. We have built on this and now we have the purpose built Day Centre and an amazing activities team – The A Team! We all share the same goal; to provide quality, engaging and meaningful activities to support physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. I lead the team, plan our calendar, liaise with entertainers and community groups and organise big events like Christmas and our British Seaside Day. We use the Pool Activity Level (PAL) tool to tailor activities to each person's cognitive abilities. It's all about making sure everyone can participate in a way that feels good for them.

Any advice for someone starting in this role? Get to know your clients. Learn about their lives, passions and quirks. That's how you create activities that truly matter. It's not just about filling time - it's about filling hearts.

Thanks Erika! You're always ready to jump in, full of heart & devoted to our clients. Your passion shines through - you truly are our Activities Queen!

(Though you may regret revealing your secretarial dreams and lightning-fast typing skills to the admin team!)

Meaningful Activities

Evelyn giving Coral a hand in the laundry. They worked together for about an hour and shared a few good laughs along the way.



Who knew laundry could be this much fun?



During a 1-1 activity with Dawn, Shirley has done a wonderful job creating her robin. She used lots of recycled materials of her own choice and we're sure you'll agree it's pretty special.

Christmas... is only 7 weeks away, so we will be starting our festive planning over the next two weeks. Look out for letters coming your way asking about any changes you'd like to make over Christmas. If you have any queries please do get in touch.



WEST HEANTON DAY CENTRE WILL BE CLOSED FROM
SAT 20th DEC, RE-OPENING ON MON 5th JAN

Here is a round up of all the goings on during October.

Don't forget you can see many more pictures, stories and videos on our facebook page:
www.facebook.com/WestHeanton







Harvest Festival with Rev Martin Warren



